

MA THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

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PRESS RELEASE

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COLLECTING DRAWINGS IN ENGLAND November 3, 1987 - January 17, 1988

Fifty beautiful objects--some formerly belonging to great English collectors of the 17th and 18th centuries and showing their individual tastes and passionate acquisitiveness--make up the exhibition *Collecting Drawings in England*, on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art from November 3, 1987, through January 17, 1988.

Complementing the loan exhibition *Master Drawings from Chatsworth*, the paintings, sculpture, and decorative objects in this Gallery A show illustrate how and why the British became ardent collectors of drawings, which at the time were seldom executed as finished works of art. They "have more of the spirit and force of art than finished paintings, for they come from either flow of force or depth of study," so reported lawyer, architect, and historian Roger North of the famous 1694 sale of Sir Peter Lely's drawings. Twenty sheets from Sir Peter Lely's collection are in the Chatsworth show and Sir Peter Lely's oil painting of Mrs. Leneve in this complementary show, now in The Cleveland Museum of Art collection, came from the collection of literary figure Horace Walpole. Among the earliest lovers of drawings in England were Nicholas Lanier, employed to buy pictures abroad by Charles I, some of whose drawings made their way into the Chatsworth collection. The Earl of Arundel, perhaps the most successful collector of drawings in 17th century England,

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accumulated several thousand sheets, some of which are shown here in prints by his "publicist" Wenzel Hollar, as well as the famous classical marble sculptures now at the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. Englishmen of this period would have eagerly sought ancient cameos, Renaissance medals, such sculptures as Giambologna's late 16th-century bronze Striding Mars, and such furnishings as walnut William and Mary side chairs (1690-95) and silversmith Benjamin Pyne's gilt silver Monteith (or punchbowl, 1715-16). Collecting Drawings in England traces the social and political background of celebrated collections as families gained and lost wealth and prestige due to political or religious turmoil, and as Englishmen imitated what they saw in travels abroad, establishing their prominence and educating their countrymen.

Michael Miller, assistant curator of prints and drawings, organized the exhibition from the Museum's collections with loans from the Cleveland Public Library.

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